



Chadwick, A. (2016). Foot-fall and Hoof-hit. Agencies, Movements, Materialities, and Identities; and Later Prehistoric and Romano-British Trackways. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 26(01), 93-120.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S095977431500027X>

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## **Foot-fall and hoof-hit. Agencies, movements, materialities, and identities; and later prehistoric and Romano-British trackways**

Holloway – the hollow way. A sunken path, a deep and shady lane. A route that centuries of foot-fall, hoof-hit, wheel-roll and rain run have harrowed into the land. (Macfarlane, Donwood and Richards 2012, 3).

### **Introduction**

A 2013 research seminar hosted by the EngLaId project<sup>1</sup> examined whether or not landscapes are invested with agency, reflecting theoretical discussions which propose that people, other living organisms and objects are entangled within meshworks or assemblages of relational agency. This paper builds upon these debates through case studies of later prehistoric and Romano-British trackways from Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. It argues that agency resided in and was enacted through constraints and affordances between people, animals, and the material, lived-in world.

### **Economic spaces or inhabited places?**

Descriptions of later prehistoric and Romano-British trackways have traditionally been subsumed within meta-narratives of rural production and economy, themselves frequently dominated by assumptions concerning centralisation, planning and rationality.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly true for the Roman period, and contrasts with the theoretically-informed discussions of land allotment and tenure in Bronze Age Britain (e.g. Johnston 2005; Wickstead 2008). Instead, there are some highly normative accounts of the countryside where the identities and agencies of Iron Age and Romano-British rural communities have been overlooked (e.g. Cunliffe 2004; Dark and Dark 1997; King 2004; McCarthy 2013; cf. Taylor 2013, 172–174; Witcher 2006, 39). With notable exceptions (Bevan 2005; Giles 2007, 2012; Fenton-Thomas 2005; Moore 2006; Petts 1998; Sharples 2010; Taylor 2013), the social significance of rural landscapes is rarely explored. Only a few studies have considered how field systems and trackways might have been experienced in the past.

Rather than a series of abstract *spaces* dominated by functional or economic concerns, however, it is more productive to envisage rural landscapes as meaning-full *places*, a qualitative difference summarised elsewhere (e.g. Bender 1993; Casey 1998; 2001; Chadwick 2004; Evans 1985; Ingold 2000; Tilley 1994). These approaches, many influenced by phenomenological thought, attempt to understand how people perceive and experience landscapes, and how practical and symbolic significance is attributed to different places over time. Landscapes are not merely palimpsests of activity, but more dynamic locales of multifarious meanings, memories and temporalities, some conflicting with one another. A useful concept is the ‘taskscape’ – entwined rhythms of technical and social activities, embedded within an emergent world of multiple temporalities (Ingold 1993, 158, 163). The construction of field systems and trackways altered people’s notions of time and place. The time taken to walk to fields or along trackways, to dig ditches and create and maintain banks and hedges became part of new ways of moving, and of thinking about the world (Chadwick 2008, 211). These features drew people, plants and animals together in closer spatial, temporal and social relations, but they also emerged out of the very same taskscapes.

## Actors, identities, agencies and materialities

Examining how agency is enacted requires a review of how it has been conceived within archaeology. During the 1980s and 1990s, agency was envisaged as the capacity of self-aware, individual human agents to intentionally act upon the world, alongside communal practices extending below self-awareness (Barrett 1988; 2001; Johnson 1989). Such practices take place through explicit and implicit social structures or fields (Bourdieu 1977; 1992), what Bourdieu termed *habitus*; reproduced through agency and the routine acts of everyday life. Structuration theory proposed that structure is at once the exercise of agency and the constitution of societies, a dialectic between individuals and others in communities (Giddens 1984; Jenkins 2008). Unstated behavioural cues, ‘corporeal rules’, and contextually and culturally contingent, embodied performances are also important (Butler 1993; Goffman 1969; Turner 1988). Agency can also mean decisions *not* to act, whilst unanticipated events, imperfect practices and improvisations may also lead to social change and reconfigurations of structures (Barth 1987; 2002; Sewell 1992).

Such dialectical or co-deterministic conceptions of agency assume that autonomous, anthropogenic actors affect a passive material world; yet often ignore how other people, beings and things influence human practices (Dépelteau 2008; Knappett & Malafouris 2008; Latour 2005; Robb 2010). The concept of relational personhood thus proposes that human identities emerge in mutually constitutive connectivity with other beings and the material world (Brück 2001; Casella & Croucher 2011; Chadwick 2004; Fowler 2004). In later prehistoric Britain for example, age, gender and status, and traditional communal structures of family, clan or tribe, might often have been more important than individual agency. After the Roman conquest, although these may have developed into wider Romano-British identities, settlement and material culture evidence suggests this varied greatly. Many ‘Roman’ occupiers and settlers hailed from provinces across the empire, and urban and rural dwellers, soldiers and slaves, villa owners and tenant farmers had correspondingly varied identities, bodily dispositions and agencies due to structures of power, gender and class (Barrett 1997; Eckardt 2010; Gardner 2002; James 2001; Revell 2010; Woolf 1995).

The notion of affordances is also relevant, and was first developed as an ecological approach to the psychology of perception. It was suggested that what living organisms perceive are not a series of abstract things, but rather a quality or potential they furnish or *afford* for various activities (Gibson 1979, 36, 127–132). Though criticised for environmental determinism (Ingold 2011, 77–79), the significance of the idea here is in its relational approach to the interactions between living beings and the physical world. Affordances can thus be seen as phenomena that frame but do not necessarily determine agential action (Hutchby 2001, 444). They may also have unintended, emergent consequences. Another significant contribution to agency debates has been the development of Actor Network Theory (ANT), in which *actants* include people but also ideas, social customs, materials and objects, and other biological organisms (Latour 2005, 46, 54–55) – all able to affect the behaviours or environments of other actants in the network. Latour’s networks envisage agency equally distributed between fixed nodal points, but this has been criticised as not all actants may have the same capacity to act upon the world (Bennett 2010, 23; Ingold 2008, 212; 2011, 94–95; Lucas 2013, 375). Nonetheless, ANT as well as other relational theories have all proved increasingly influential within sociology, cultural geography and anthropology (Birke & Hockenhull 2012; Buller 2014; Haraway 2008; Ingold 2000; 2011; Johnston 2008; Jones & Cloke 2008; Law & Hassard 1999; J. Lorimer 2010; Murdoch 1997). ‘Hybrid geographies’ (Whatmore 2002) in

particular have proved useful in deconstructing culture: nature and human: non-human dichotomies, and notions of people as indivisible agents. Archaeologists cannot assume that such historically and culturally contingent concepts are applicable to past societies.

#### **INSERT FIG. 1 NEAR HERE**

For example, people in small-scale agricultural communities who live closely with plants and animals often consider them in terms of mutualism and interdependence rather than economic exploitation (Battaglia 1990; Campbell 2005; Dwyer & Minnegal 2005; Faye 1996; Fijn 2011; Ingold 2000; Rival 2001; Seaglion 1999). In daily and seasonal movements, herders and animals share embodied experiences of particular places, paths and trackways. Agency co-emerges through continuous, subtle shifts in relationships with companion animals such as dogs and horses, and with older, trusted herd leaders that decide which paths to take (Gooch 2008, 70; Gray 1999, 450; Lorimer 2006, 498). People learn to see the world through animal eyes, alert to their movements, moods and motivations, matching their pace and bodily dispositions to those of livestock (Ingold & Vergunst 2008, 11). Such close shared experiences with humans are all part of an agential culture of the herd, where older sheep ‘heft’ younger animals, cattle and goats bring themselves in from fields or pastures for milking, and pigs follow people attentively around settlements. Although archaeologies of animality have yet to appear, there is growing interest in the complex social interactions between people, plants and animals in the past (e.g. Aldred 2012; Argent 2010; Armstrong Oma 2010; Brittain & Overton 2013; Chadwick 2007; Chadwick, Martin & Richardson 2013; Giles 2012; Overton & Hamilakis 2013; Orton 2010; Van der Veen 2014; **Fig. 1**).

Identity and agency are also constituted and performed through material culture, though word limits prevent a review of this extensive literature. Objects can carry traces of other people, places and times, manifesting spirits, kinship and gender relations, materialising memories, and presencing absences. In his dense and problematic attempts to theorise such relationships, Gell proposed that artworks have agency (1992; 1998), ensnaring people in networks of relations, exerting power and inspiring feelings of awe, even fear. This ‘congealed trace’ of the artist/creator (Gell 1998, 29–36) is a limited secondary or abducted agency, a mimetic animism formed by viewers’ perceptions rather than the qualities of objects, although Gell’s notion of ‘technologies of enchantment’ has proved influential (Garrow & Gosden 2012; Giles 2008; Joy 2009). Lemonnier (2012, 133–134) suggested that objects are ‘perissological resonators’ for human meanings expressed as non-verbal agencies. Such approaches to material agency all perpetuate subject: object and human: non-human dichotomies, however, and may also ignore the intrinsic properties of things themselves, though this latter point is a matter of considerable contention (cf. Burström 2012; Holbraad 2009; Ingold 2007; Olsen 2010, 2012; Miller 2005; 2007; Webmoor & Witmore 2008).

Human understandings of the physical world thus emerge through social meanings and experiential engagements, but materiality simultaneously transforms people through social practices and agency – the ‘alchemy of human being’ (Gosden 2005, 209; see also Jones 2012, 127). Matter matters, in other words. This is not to avow an atheoretical materialism, rejecting social and symbolic meanings (*contra* Olsen 2012, 22–23), but rather to assert the importance of the material world in past and present humanities. The qualities and meanings of materials – the ‘thingness’ of things – are not fixed but contingent and relational. Material culture is the outcome of social practices and processes constituted through agency, existing ‘only in relation to the interminglings they make possible or that make them possible’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 99). Assemblage theory has highlighted that materials have qualities and agencies that may or may not emerge in relations with other actants – active

vibrant, vital matter where connectivities are themselves mobile, fluid flows (Barad 2003, 817–822; Bennett 2010, 12–13; Clark 2008, 14–15; DeLanda 2006, 96). Assemblages are similar in conception to meshworks, the interwoven lines of life, movement and interaction between all aspects of the living and non-living world proposed by Ingold (2011, 63–64). Symmetrical archaeologies and other alternative ontological approaches to the material world have developed in response to these relational ideas (e.g. Alberti & Bray 2009; Edgeworth 2014; Harris 2013; Hodder 2012; Jones 2012; Knappett & Malafouris 2008; McFadyen 2013; Olsen 2010; Pollard 2013; Webmoor & Witmore 2008; Whitley 2013, Witmore 2007).

The significance of these debates for this paper is that personhood and agency are not *a priori* conditions of human existence. There are intentional human actions, but people are also mutually constituted through relations with other people and beings, things, materials and landscapes; through embodied performances and entwined spatial practices. Landscapes are a perpetual state of becoming (Ingold 1993, 164), recursively informed by meaning and memory, practice, structure and agency. Identity, agency and materiality are co-emergent *through* heterogeneous meshworks or assemblages, and it is at some of the temporal and relational ‘knots’ where agency is most manifest. Non-human animals, plants, materials and landscape features are drawn into human sociality; yet at the same time, through their co-presence and agency, and often unpredictable entanglements and entrapments (Hodder 2012; Joyce 2008; Thomas 1991), they affect the practices, beliefs and memories of people.

## **Movement and memory**

If...movement is a necessary element of an ontology of place, then a definition of place becomes less cognitive and less dependent on boundaries... places are not so much defined by their solidity and concretization, but through the flows and convergences that occur in and through them (Aldred & Sekedat 2010-11, 13).

In many small-scale societies the world is ‘perceived through the feet’ (Ingold 2004), with walking vital to peoples experiences of identity and place. As most everyday movements in Iron Age and Roman Britain involved walking, it requires critically examination. Walking is a complex choreography of remembered and familiar ground, habitual dispositions and fluid, unthinking expertise, enmeshed with improvised and innovative movements on unfamiliar surfaces, unanticipated topographies (Lorimer 2012). It is a reaction to different terrains and textures, a recursive process where landscapes affect people, and people are part of transformations of the world, a world always in movement (Ingold 1993, 164; 2004, 333). Hard primordial geology meeting soft primal bodies, movements in glacial or tectonic time imbricated with motions and timescales of living beings. Sometimes walking is a conscious, attentive engagement with the lived-in world, such as when negotiating a muddy track, narrow mountain path or dark alleyway; but at other times walking recedes into a barely conscious rhythm of kinaesthetic connectivity to the earth.

Ingold (2004, 322–323; 2011, 37–38) and Gell (1985, 273) drew distinctions between transport and wayfaring, and between navigation and wayfinding. A transported passenger (in a vehicle) has much less experiential contact with the world, whereas wayfarers are instantiated within the dynamics of the lived-in world. Journeys and embodied practices are never simply segmented moves through neutral spaces between nodal points, with every action a discrete motion in time-space; but rather each footfall and task is interlinked, part of an ongoing movement or emergent meshwork. Bodies and landscapes are enmeshed as the

world unfolds beneath our feet, a world simultaneously shaped by our walking (Lund 2012); not the inscription of routes upon an inanimate surface, but movement ‘wherein forms themselves are generated’ (Ingold 1993, 157). Vegetation, topography and ground texture influence tempos of mobility, whilst shared kinetic rhythms and haptic geographies of walking can invoke powerful feelings of participation and communality (Ingold & Vergunst 2008, 2). Everyday tasks, postures and tool use furnish people with their bearings in the world, and walking is another socially inculcated skill that requires physical engagement with the world (Bourdieu 1977, 87; Ingold 2011, 40–41; Tilley 1994, 28). Children grow up subconsciously acquiring varied ‘vocabularies of body idiom’ or ‘techniques of collective practical reason’ (Goffman 1963, 35; Mauss 1973, 73). There are many ways of walking, dependant on social and environmental factors – the rolling swagger of a city youth, the spread-foot gait of a mud-flat fisherman. Ethnographers often recount their clumsiness compared to indigenous people walking knowledgeably through forests (e.g. Tuck-Po 2008, 28–29; Turnbull 1961, 75–76), whilst different ambulatory competences are required when dealing with desert sands, snow, mountains, or busy urban centres.

#### **INSERT FIG. 2 NEAR HERE**

Physical engagements with the ‘messy heterogeneity of being-in-the-world’ (Whatmore 2002, 147) are also proactive psychological processes that open up cognitive spaces (Connerton 1992; Lefebvre 1991; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Seamon 1980; Tilley 1994). Journeys thus take place not only as spatial and bodily motions, but also as travels forwards and backwards through time, between reflections and expectations, and different realms of being (Aldred & Sekedat 2010-11, 2; Chadwick 2004, 20). Movement is also implicit in the reproduction of individual and collective memories and identities. For the most part the world is experienced inattentively, through routine manual acts and repetitive motions (Bachelard 1969, 11). Bodies, feet and hands learn to move unconsciously in particular configurations, when making pots, grinding grain, handling animals, scrambling up a steep hillside, or when opening gates in trackways and fields (Fig. 2). People know places through practices – patterns of bodily behaviours and understandings maintained through physical and social connections between people and non-human beings, materials, and objects (Joyce 2008, 28; Reckwitz 2002, 250). In addition, formalised movements, singing and chanting associated with many ritualised ceremonies, often in specific structures or locales, also reinforce links between people, place, past and present (Abercrombie 1998, 410–415; Bell 1992, 90–92; Connerton 1989, 45–46). Landscape features, buildings and artefacts do not preserve memories, but rather evoke remembrance, with time enfolded within them at multiple levels and scales (Evans 1985, 86; Ingold 2011, 168; Jones 2007, 25). Pilgrimages to particular shrines or religious centres comprise lines of faith instantiated within the landscape, and religious and civic processions may also have been important to later Iron Age and Romano-British identities and agencies (Creighton 2006; Esmonde Cleary 2005).

The landscape can also be an important constituent of individual and group identity, a rich source of topogenic memories, stories, myths and essential social lore (e.g. Argounova-Low 2012; Basso 1996; Cruikshank 1998; Eves 1997; Gaffin 1993; Hirsch 2006; Kavari and Bleckmann 2009; Legat 2008; Myers 1991; Wyatt 2004). Individuals grow up and acquire knowledge through walking or riding around the landscape in the company of elders, with narratives of journeys often providing ‘mental maps’ of how, when and where to move. Paths, trackways and fields may even be physical manifestations of social relations with living people and ancestors (Riles 1998; Sillitoe 1999). Even everyday movements around a landscape can thus enculturate children with knowledge of cosmologies, agrarian best practice, tenurial rights, social conventions, and oral histories. But there are politics of

walking and mobility too, with some individuals or groups able to move much more freely than others, who may be denied access to particular places due to their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, class or social status (Creswell 2010; Pinder 2011; Valentine 1989).

### Travels along trackways and droveways

Knowing is a form of travelling, of moving through space; and travelling, like knowledge, is also a form of narrative (Turnbull 2007, 142).

#### INSERT FIG. 3 NEAR HERE

Trackways or droveways were components of many later prehistoric and Romano-British rural landscapes, and are conventionally interpreted as enabling livestock to be driven through blocks of arable fields, onto areas of grazing on uplands or lowland meadows. On aerial photographs and geophysical survey plots, trackways usually appear as linear, double-ditched features, though originally they would also have also been defined by earthen banks and/or hedges. Some may have developed from pit alignments, as at North Muskham in Nottinghamshire. In upland areas they are usually marked by banks of stone (Fig. 2). The social significance of these features lay not only in the fact that they linked different tasksapes such as fields and areas of pasture, and constituted places in their own right; but that they were often substantial constructions used over long periods. Darker irregular features between the ditches usually indicate holloways, deeper areas worn by generations of human feet and animal hooves, as well as the passage of carts – ‘the accumulated imprint of countless journeys’ (Ingold 1993, 167). In many areas of lowland Britain, prehistoric and Romano-British hollowed tracks have silted up completely, or have been ploughed flat, though they may still survive in upland areas, or within woodland (Fig. 3).

#### INSERT FIG. 4 NEAR HERE

Funnel-shaped entrances and narrow crushes or crowding-alleys and races were features where livestock was gathered and driven along these routes, or separated out for marking, shearing, breeding, birthing, castration or slaughter (Beamish & Shore 2008, 68–69; Chadwick 2007, 143; 2010, 143–144, 546–548; Pryor 1996, 318). ‘Funnels’ were flared entrances into trackways or fields and ‘crushes’ the end points where animals could be concentrated, with people and/or dogs driving them from behind. Examples of funnels and crushes from Nottinghamshire and South and West Yorkshire are noted elsewhere (Chadwick 2010, chapt. 6, app. D). In what follows, however, specific case studies from Yorkshire highlight examples of trackways that significantly influenced the movements and practices of people and animals, and which were intimately caught up with their lives (Fig. 4). The dominant geological and topographic trends of this region extend north-south (Chadwick 2010). The Trent Valley Mudstones and the Sherwood Sandstones consist of broad, alluvial river valleys interspersed with gentle gravel ridges. In the north of Nottinghamshire and the east of South Yorkshire the low landscape merges into the flatlands of the Humberhead Levels. Magnesian Limestone and Coal Measures deposits form more elevated, undulating landscapes, cut by broad river valleys separated by watershed ridges and occasional crags.

#### *Methley*

To the west of Castleford at Methley in West Yorkshire, the confluence of the Rivers Aire and Calder forms an extensive area of flat floodplain, still susceptible to winter flooding and the formation of temporary shallow lakes or meres. In the past much of this low-lying landscape of shifting river loops, oxbows and grassland would probably have been utilised for hay meadows and summer grazing. During the later Iron Age and Roman periods, the floodplain was divided into fields and enclosures linked by trackways (Fig. 5). One important



axial route extended for over four kilometres from the lowest-lying ground to the east and north, following the north-east to south-west contours of the rising ground to the west (Fig. 6). This was not a straight track, but one that meandered through the landscape with notable kinks or changes in direction, in one instance curving past a Bronze Age ring ditch, perhaps out of respect or superstitious avoidance. There were also passing places along the trackway, possible gateways and crushes, and large enclosures that might have been livestock corrals.

**INSERT FIGS. 5 & 6 NEAR HERE**

A possible Roman road may extend underneath or across the trackway (Deegan 2007). The relationship is ambiguous – the straight double ditches do not cut across those of the sinuous trackway, yet earlier ditches may simply have been infilled. The straight feature may have been merely an addition to an existing network of routeways. Alternatively, the sinuous track could represent the later subversion of an early Roman road, or the reassertion of an older route. The potential politics and agencies manifested by these features are intriguing. The sinuosity may owe much to preceding movements of livestock across the floodplain, this drove route only being ‘formalised’ later in its history. Once emphasised through ditches, banks and possibly hedges, this routeway’s sinuous bends would then have constrained the movements of people and animals, and affected subsequent memories and histories of its use. To the south-west, the trackway rises gradually and follows the contours of a ridge.

*Swillington Common*

At Swillington Common east of Leeds, aerial photography, geophysical survey and open area excavations have revealed a multi-period landscape of round barrow ring ditches, field systems and enclosures (Deegan 2001; Howell 2001; Johnson 2002; Fig. 7). One striking feature was a broadly north-south orientated, double-ditched trackway up to 8-10m wide, in places featuring wheel ruts, and deepened by wear into a holloway. It was extended lengthways over time, and Late Bronze Age, Iron Age and earlier Romano-British pottery was recovered from the holloway and the double ditches; whilst the trackway also affected the shape and position of an unusual D-shaped palisaded enclosure, probably earlier Iron Age in date (Howell 2001, 54–57, figs 44–45). The holloway was most pronounced next to this enclosure, hinting at greater traffic and perhaps its social importance too. The route was used for at least 600-800 years, and mirrored the line of the later prehistoric linear earthwork of Grim’s Ditch to the west. Additional Iron Age and Romano-British ditches, and trackways also featuring wheel ruts, were in turn aligned with regard to the barrows and the trackway.

**INSERT FIG. 7 NEAR HERE**

Of particular note is the pronounced ‘kink’ along the trackway near three Bronze Age round barrows, perhaps where it had diverted to respect a pre-existing tenurial boundary. This kink persisted for many centuries, with people and animals dutifully changing direction along the trackway. There was some later ‘braiding’ caused by later foot, hoofed and wheeled traffic, but the basic bend remained in place, remarkable given the human and animal predilection for creating short cuts. Although probably reinforced by banks or hedgerows; that the kink persisted for so long implies it originally held social significance, even if this was forgotten over time. Emerging out of human agency and unknown actants, it went on to affect the embodied movements of many generations of people and animals. A later trapezoidal ditched enclosure of the eighth to tenth-century AD re-used the holloway as its southern entrance, incorporating a Bronze Age round barrow and intersecting with the point where an Iron Age or Romano-British field ditch met another Bronze Age barrow (Chadwick 2013b, 298). Although a livestock-related function was originally proposed for this enclosure (Johnson 2002, 53, 58), its precise positioning and close spatial referencing of earlier landscape features is intriguing. A human inhumation burial radiocarbon dated to AD 810–1000 was



dug into the silted up ring ditch of the third barrow, perhaps reflecting more symbolic post-Roman and Anglo-Scandinavian re-use (q.v. Semple 1998; Williams 1998).

Investigations highlight the similar longevity of other trackways – one example at Melton in East Yorkshire was in use for over 2000 years (Fenton-Thomas 2011, 361–362). To people inhabiting these landscapes it must have seemed that such features had *always* been there and always would be; *axes mundi* of memory and materiality. It is a sobering thought that these routes could last for millennia, when it has been a mere 55 years since the opening of the M1 motorway. Only some Roman roads persisted as long. Not all trackways disappeared with the passing of Roman Britain, and occasionally formed the basis for medieval parish boundaries (e.g. Deegan and Foard 2007, 85, fig. 6.3). A Romano-British trackway, forming part of the township boundary between Ledston and Micklefield from the Norman period onwards (Brennand et al. 2007; Faull 1981), is still visible as a holloway.

### On the verge of death

Movement might be considered the essence of life, a series of dynamic practices. Yet there is evidence to suggest that in Iron Age and Roman Britain, death was not considered the final descent into entropy that modern notions of mortality envisage. Many Roman cemeteries were arranged along roads, especially those leading to and from settlements; but people were sometimes buried near to trackways too. At South Elmsall in West Yorkshire, at a T-shaped trackway junction there were three rectangular graves containing remains of four different human individuals (Howell 1998), with the two single inhumations radiocarbon dated to 340–35 BC and 362–105 BC (Grassam 2010, 12; **Fig. 8**). The broadly east-west aligned trackway was hollowed from wear, and was probably more heavily utilised. The north-west to south-east orientated trackway ditches cut obliquely across a subrectangular Bronze Age palisaded enclosure, from one corner to the other, perhaps a deliberate erasure of or reference to an earlier, still visible structure. The trackway ditches contained later prehistoric and Romano-British pottery, but also animal bone that produced early medieval radiocarbon dates, indicating that this route too was used over a protracted period.

#### INSERT FIG. 8 NEAR HERE

Just south-west of Collingham in West Yorkshire, within a few metres of another trackway junction, there was a crouched burial of an adult male aged 30–40, radiocarbon dated to 170 BC–AD 20 (Gregory & Daniel 2013, 146–147). At Bilham near Brodsworth in South Yorkshire, excavation revealed the flexed inhumation of a young man buried with pendants made from a boar's tusk and a dog or wolf canine, dated to the second-century BC. Shortly after burial the body appears to have been partially exhumed and the torso moved (McIntyre 2009). This burial was within a double-ditched trackway, near the funnel-shaped entrance into a 'banjo' enclosure probably associated with livestock herding (C. Merrony pers. comm.; **Fig. 9**). The crouched burial of a five to six year old child was found nearby (McIntyre 2010).

To modern sensibilities the graves at South Elmsall and Bilham seem to be in highly unpropitious positions, beneath the passage of feet and hooves. It is possible that these were liminal areas similar to medieval and post-medieval crossroads, where those who had transgressed social norms or had died unlucky deaths could be safely interred without harming the living. Alternatively, these were actually honoured places, linking the deceased to the livestock on which life and status depended, and emphasising the importance of trackways, whatever their precise chronological relationship to the burials – it cannot be

ascertained whether the burials were inserted within existing trackways, or if the trackways were created around known grave locations. Perhaps these individuals were considered to be spirit guardians protecting living people and animals from any malign influences travelling along trackways, or this may even have been a way for the dead to still travel with people, continuing to keep watch over flocks and herds. The dead were not passive, but rather a powerful presence to be drawn upon (q.v. Giles 2012, 222–223). Journeys along trackways may thus at times also have had wider spiritual and metaphorical associations.

Many Middle Iron Age burials in East Yorkshire took place in square barrow cemeteries that developed alongside paths and trackways (Bevan 1997; Giles 2007; 2012; Stoertz 1997), or near trackway junctions. ‘Ladder’ settlements also developed alongside existing routeways. At Easington in Holderness, a small pit containing cremated adult human bone yielding radiocarbon dates of 360–290 BC and 230–50 BC was cut by the trackway ditch of a ‘ladder’ settlement (Richardson 2011, 65; Fig. 10). Another cremation burial close to the southern side of the trackway was associated with hand-made, later Iron Age pottery. A T-junction subsequently developed, and here a large pit contained a tuyere fragment and a horse burial radiocarbon dated to AD 70–240. An inhumation burial of an adult human dated to AD 40–230 was cut into the north-eastern trackway ditch, whilst a cremation burial also radiocarbon dated to AD 40–230 was inserted into the corner of a nearby enclosure (Richardson 2011, 80, 83–84). These burials all suggest close connections between trackways, humans and herds.

The Easington trackways remained significant in local memories. A sixth-century AD grave of a nine or ten year old juvenile buried with beads was dug into the silted-up junction between a trackway and an enclosure, whilst three inhumations of similar date accompanied by knives and a spearhead were buried in two graves nearby. This resonates with a burial near Adwick-le-Street in South Yorkshire, where the grave of an adult woman from the ninth century AD was cut into the fill of a Romano-British trackway ditch, her grave goods including two Viking-style bronze ‘tortoise’ brooches (Speed and Rogers 2004). Isotope analyses indicated that the woman probably spent her childhood in Norway. This trackway thus remained a partly visible route, one re-appropriated by Anglo-Scandinavian groups.

## **Making tracks**

...to follow a path is to remember the way. (Ingold 2000, 147).

Trackways are usually seen as intentional constructions, but they resulted from innumerable improvisations, choices and embodied engagements with materials during social practices of construction (q.v. McFadyen 2007; Owoc 2005). Some apparently planned double-ditched trackways developed in a much more piecemeal manner as additional fields were enclosed by ditches and existing boundaries were extended and re-cut, as at Armthorpe and Edenthorpe in South Yorkshire (Chadwick 2008, 226; 2013a, 18–20; Richardson 2008, 15). They might have been paths used for decades or centuries before being formalised through ditch digging and bank construction, during which new meshes of materials and agencies were brought into being. Their creation was conditional, fluid and emergent, yet these constructions endured beyond human and animal lives and bodies. After a few generations, many trackways may have become named features with their own histories (q.v. Joy 2009).

There is still a tendency to regard trackways and roads as routes between nodal settlement points, abstract and passive spaces rather than inhabited, affective places. This is a static, modern perspective (Aldred 2014, 24; Edgeworth 2014, 49-50; Fleming 2010, 15; Sheller & Urry 2006, 214). Many people in later prehistoric and Romano-British rural communities might have actually spent more time moving along trackways and around fields than inside buildings and settlement enclosures. From a longer-term perspective, entire settlements could even be regarded as mobile, constructed, inhabited and abandoned over decades and centuries, whilst nearby trackways remained as semi-permanent fixtures in the landscape, as at Swillington Common and Melton. This overturns conventional assumptions about senses of place and sedentarism. This was a dwelling-in-movement, always in becoming (Aldred & Sekedat 2010-11, 13; Ingold 1993, 163). Animals would have remembered the same paths and trackways, and may often have taken themselves along them with little urging by humans, following older, ‘hefted’ beasts (Gray 1999; Lorimer 2006). At funnels and crushes there would have been ‘piss-mires’ of hoofprints, faeces and urine as livestock bunched up and lingered out of hunger, wilfulness or confusion (Fig. 1). Finds of iron-tipped ox-goads from Romano-British sites indicate that although some animals responded well to the directions of people and dogs, others were more obstreperous. Animals too partly shaped trackways, fields, funnels, enclosures and pens. If a fence was not stout enough to withstand the attentions of pigs, if cattle breached a hedge and strayed or damaged crops, or if a gateway was in an unsuitable place, then it was animals that evinced or enacted this agency. People and animals were co-creators of these landscapes, and in turn these assemblages of materials and agencies affected them, and their shared movements and memories (Buller 2014, 311; Chadwick 2007, 144–145; Haraway 2008, 240; cf. Casey 2001, 688).

#### **INSERT FIG. 9 NEAR HERE**

Seasonal rhythms were also important (Fenton-Thomas 2005; Giles 2012; Giles & Parker Pearson 1999), and in addition to daily movements, some trackways facilitated journeys from lower ground to higher areas and groups of irregular and ‘banjo’ enclosures, as at South Hiendley and South Kirkby, and Wombwell Wood and Jump (Chadwick 2010, app. D; **Figs. 9–10**). Their exposed location, combined with a lack of evidence for sustained ‘domestic’ occupation in the few excavated examples, suggests intermittent or seasonal use.<sup>3</sup> In lowland Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, many trackways extended out onto low-lying river floodplains subject to winter and spring inundations, but forming lush summer meadows, as near Dunston’s Clump and Chainbridge Lane. At Balby Carr there were roundhouses, paddocks and trackways from later Iron Age and early Roman occupation (Jones et al. 2007; Muldowney 2008; Rose 2003), but evidence for carr woodland and water-filled ditches suggests this was a dank place in winter. Whole communities, or sections of communities, may have decamped to upland areas and river valleys with livestock during summer months. These places were familiar, yet had changed on each return (Bender 2001, 83–84). Roundhouses required repair, trackway and enclosure ditches needed re-cutting. Ethno-historical evidence suggests that often mainly women and children inhabited seasonal settlements (Curwen 1946, 82–83; Sayce 1956, 132–133), perhaps enjoying greater social freedoms there. Such places had their own affordances, agencies, and energies.

#### **INSERT FIG. 10 NEAR HERE**

For rural dwellers the scale and nature of movements would have varied according to age, gender, status and occupation. For some, walks along trackways might have been strenuous exertions, weighed down by water or firewood. The very old and very young may not have ventured far from settlements, whilst young men and women might have looked after flocks and herds and ranged further afield. Many people in Iron Age communities might have gone barefoot from spring to autumn, whilst the Roman conquest brought with it new forms of

footwear, and new ways of walking. This may even have subtly and subconsciously led to a growing separation between some people and the landscape (q.v. Ingold 2004, 320–321). In Roman society there were also social conventions of posture and movement based on class and identity, some implicit and unspoken, yet also chronicled by satirists (Barrett 1997; O’Sullivan 2011; Roller 2006). The movements, posture and gestures of a mature Roman matron visiting shrines in *Eboracum* (York) or *Lagentium* (Castleford) would have been quite different from those of a young rural herder with her livestock, negotiating a trackway or hillside path. The journeys of many prehistoric and Romano-British farmers and herders would have been at the same unhurried tread as their livestock, but such daily and seasonal peregrinations would have contrasted with the measured pace of marching Roman soldiers, or the swift horse-borne movements of cavalrymen or nobles.

Journeys by horse compress space-time, greatly reducing the length of travel, and facilitate communication between individuals and groups. Piggott (1992), Fleming (2010) and Giles (2012) have explored the social implications of people riding fast and high on horses or in chariots/carriages, above those with less wealth and status. Decorated items of horse harness and carriage furniture in Iron Age and Roman Britain such as snaffle bits, cheek pieces, terret rings and linch pins (Garrow and Gosden 2012; Giles 2012) would have contributed to the sensory impacts of horse and carriage-borne riders, with thudding hooves, light glinting off jangling harnesses, and clouds of dust or sprays of water and mud. Cavalrymen, charioteers and/or members of social elites may have expended considerable time and resources looking after horses and vehicles (or had others to do so for them). Riders may have become one with favourite steeds, attentive to each other’s wishes, centaur-like assemblages of energy and physicality (Gooch 2008, 73). Horse riding or carriage driving requires specialised embodied skills and practices, and additional knowledge of fodder and water sources.

In colonial contexts there are considerable ambiguities regarding roads and routeways (Given 2004; O’Hanlon & Frankland 2003). Roman roads were important militarily and logistically, but were also symbols of imperial might – ‘technologies of power’ (Forcey 1997; Witcher 1997). Roman roads often cut across indigenous trackways and boundaries, even settlement enclosures (O’Neill 2001, 110–114; Riley 1980, 94–95; Roberts, Deegan & Berg 2010, 58, 71), disrupting familiar routes and routines, and ignoring local tenure and tradition. It suggests control over traditional patterns of movement was a concern of the occupiers. The major Roman road network in Britain is relatively well understood (Davies 2008; Margary 1973), and although not as straight as popularly supposed, Roman roads were qualitatively different to most preceding indigenous routeways. Parallel flanking ditches were common to both, and some Iron Age trackways had metalled surfaces, but not the many compressed layers of stone and earth forming the raised *agger* of Roman roads. Sometimes Roman roads made use of pre-existing indigenous routes, however, along ridgelines, through valleys and across fords, as with the Roman Ridge road at Aberford. In marshy areas, turf, timber and brushwood ‘corduroy’ causeways provided footings for road surfaces (Dearne 1997; Van de Noort et al. 1997). Near the Roman fort at Adel, part of the Ilkley-Tadcaster road was rafted on timbers with a <sup>14</sup>C date of 180 BC – AD 30 (Jefferson & Roberts 2006) – either re-used timbers from a native structure, or the utilisation of a pre-conquest trackway.

Initially it might have mainly been soldiers, officials and non-local traders using Roman roads, native people shunning them and continuing to use earlier trackways and paths (Petts 1998). Roman roads presented new opportunities and new markets for farmers and artisans, however. Potters near *Danum* (Doncaster) such as Sarrius were able to send pottery up to the

northern frontier. Many people would have chosen to live alongside roads near *mansiones* and *tabernae*, or within the towns that developed across many of these routes. Long-distance journeys would have become much easier in Roman Britain, not merely in physical terms – in Iron Age Britain, negotiations, permissions and gifts may have been required in order to pass across the territories of different tribal groups. Such travels may have been sources of stories and personal prestige (Giles 2012, 230). Over time, some traditional drove routes and trackways may have fallen out of use, and some later fields and trackways were clearly orientated towards Roman roads (Riley 1980, 94–95).

Longer-distance herding may have become possible, supplying Hadrian's Wall and other military centres (Stallibrass 2009). Metalled roads may have proved too hard for cattle or horse hooves on longer journeys, however, and post-medieval droving practices required cattle to be shod. The Romans used hipposandals, but it is not known if their cattle had 'bos sandals', or more expedient leather bindings. Most people leading pack animals or driving livestock would have probably travelled beside Roman roads rather than along them (Mitchell 1993, 134). A Roman road in France had sandy tracks on each side of the metalled surface that seem to have been for this purpose (Chevalier 1976, 93). Excavation of the Roman Ridge revealed what were interpreted as wind-blown sand deposits on either side of the *agger* (O'Neill 2001, 115), and similar contexts were noted alongside the Roman road at Redhouse Farm in South Yorkshire (Meadows & Chapman 2004, 13–14). It is possible that these were to facilitate movements of unshod animal traffic.

Although military units built some of the first roads, and local towns were often meant to take responsibility for maintenance thereafter, it is likely that forced labour was also used to construct and maintain them (Given 2004, 54; Mitchell 1993, 126–127). This took people away from their fields, and severed social networks of tenure, obligation and debt. People living alongside roads could have livestock, wagons and food requisitioned by Roman soldiers or officials, or face demands for hospitality and accommodation. The same roads permitted Roman soldiers and tax officials to penetrate deeper into the countryside. In more remote areas and especially as the empire began to disintegrate, corrupt troops and *stationarii* extracted unofficial taxes and tolls from travellers (Lintott 1993, 125–126), even as banditry increased. In parts of the empire this evolved into sanctioned military patronage by the later third and fourth centuries AD, with soldiers offering protection to local inhabitants at a price.

## **Walking over stories**

...we are always walking over stories, over a soil rich with the blood, toil, tears and sweat of generations, beside walls in which each stone has been cut and put in place, and each hedgerow planted and pruned by calloused hands. (Bunting 2009, 6).

Theories of relational agency, meshworks and assemblages are enchanting, but are more than rhetoric, and have potentially profound implications for contemporary archaeological practice. Linear features such as trackways are often treated as objectified lines on maps or plans, whether transcribed from aerial photographs, lidar plots or topographic surveys, or exposed on excavations. Large-scale GIS-based mapping is vital to identifying the extent and potential purpose of such features, but can also provide insights into the often subtle use that was made in the past of topography when paths were forming or trackways were created (e.g. Deegan 2007; Gillings 2012), demonstrating how subtle interactions between people, animals and the landscape led to new, emergent practices and features. Unfortunately, such mapping

can potentially remove the sense of lived human and animal scale, and thus it is also important to consider micro-topographies of hollowing, cart ruts and hoof prints.

Identifying archaeological features/meshworks is a process of ‘territorialisation’ (DeLanda 2006, 28–29), a natural consequence of the need to identify patterns and typologies, but notions of stable, bounded entities, whether landscape features or social groupings, are problematic if they are active and mutable assemblages (Hofmann 2013, 166). What archaeologists assume were stable categories (a pot, a trackway) were continuously transformed and refashioned through practice. A path could become a trackway, an enclosure or field boundary could become part of a driveway, or a trackway might be abandoned due to a sudden change in tenure. Features intrinsic to dynamic flows can end up being investigated through narrow interventions that portray very fixed, two-dimensional depictions of complex multi-temporal processes. The fluid, emergent aspects of movement confound conventional archaeological modes of representation and description (Aldred and Sekedat 2010–11). Trackways were not objectified inert ‘things’, but rather entangled assemblages where different materials, agencies, processes and practices met and were materialised.

#### **INSERT FIG. 11 NEAR HERE**

A close-grained approach to investigating these transformative, emergent practices requires extensive and innovative sampling (Fig. 11), close attention to tip lines and traces of ditch re-cutting, and the refitting of sherds, thin-sectioning and mineralogical sourcing of pottery, in order to identify differences in life histories, use and disuse (q.v. Joy 2009, 545). Such animate archaeologies will involve biographical approaches to human and animal remains, exploring skeletal evidence for foot-rot or tuberculosis for example; along with isotope analyses that may indicate movements of people and animals between different landscapes (Jay et al. 2013; Montgomery, Lakin & Evans 2007). Animal bone, pottery, and other finds also cannot always be separated into distinct modern categories when part of wider meshworks. For example, large ceramic deposits within ditches, especially of Romano-British date, are often interpreted as refuse disposal. Yet there may have been associations between ditch re-cutting and large dumps of broken pottery, burnt stone and charcoal, often from middens, at particular periods in settlement histories (Chadwick 2012, 302; Martin 2007, 96–98; Fig. 12). Such material was deposited in specific places (Richardson 2008; Weston 2013), and included substantial portions of freshly broken Roman vessels in addition to worn and abraded sherds. This mixing of material from hearths and eating and drinking with boundaries and trackways might have conveyed subconscious concerns with tenure, identity or memory (Evans 2003, 141–143). Assemblages of materials could be transformed into new configurations, and take on novel qualities, meanings and agencies. Animals too are ‘enacted’ assemblages (Law & Mol 2008), whose meat, blood, flesh, horns, hides, milk and manure can be transformed into other materials, other meshworks (Hofmann 2013, 158).

#### **INSERT FIG. 12 NEAR HERE**

DeLanda (2006, 64–66) criticised *habitus* as a constricting ‘master process’, and Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ formulations can appear too static, leaving little space for subaltern discourses, individuals, and the fluid relationships between people, other beings, and the material world (de Certeau 1984; Joyce & Lopiparo 2005; Miller 2005; Robb 2010; Schwarz 2013). Yet Bourdieu’s concept of ‘practical logic’ is important, for many flows and energies within assemblages arise through practice and experiential engagements. Social structures can limit action, but may also provide the basis for innovation (Barth 2002; Sewell 1992). Traditional institutions can be the settings for contestation and debate. Like assemblages, *habitus* generates ‘thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions’ (Bourdieu 1992, 55). Bourdieu’s emphasis on the active presencing of past experiences through practice has also been

reiterated by others (Gosden 1997; Jones 2012; Fowler 2013; Lucas 2012). *Habitus* may thus be envisaged as a component of a meshwork or assemblage, part of the improvisational, relational links between bodies and place, self and landscape (Casey 2001, 686). It is these relations between humans, animals, plants things and materials within agential practices that reproduce social structures (q.v. Bourdieu 1992: 55–56; Reckwitz 2002, 253).

Some trackways affected movements, memories and myths many centuries after they were first built, whereas for others their human meanings and influence waxed and waned over long periods. In this sense the past is never finished, ‘we never leave it and it never leaves us behind’ (Barad 2007, ix). Particular assemblages and relations endured longer than others, and it is this persistence that may be most significant (Fowler 2013, 54–55; Ingold 2010, 258; Lucas 2012, 186–187). There is still a tendency to divide landscapes into static palimpsests that cannot adequately convey entanglements of temporality, materiality and memory, and the emergent qualities of trackways, enclosures and fields. Although they need to remain usable, accessible reports, the structures of some publications need to frame histories around movement rather than stasis, and draw out the often subtle connections between past and present (e.g. Aldred 2014; Cooper and Edmonds 2002; DeSilvey 2012).

### **A wyrd of wayfaring**

One need not be a mystic to accept that certain old paths are linear only in a simple sense. Like trees, they have branches and like rivers they have tributaries. They are rifts within which time might exist as pure surface, prone to recapitulation and rhyme, weird morphologies, uncanny doublings... Walking such paths, you might walk up strange pasts. (Macfarlane, Donwood & Richards 2012, 4).

Trackways frequently followed contours along slopes, or made use of natural dips and hollows, and were therefore subtle responses to the natural topography. The landscape could be simultaneously a constraint, in that breaks of slope or ridges were often the ‘natural’ lines to follow; and also an affordance, providing possibilities for trackways construction. The routine, familiar movements of livestock across areas created trails that were eventually formalised through the construction of trackways. The ditches, banks, hedges, fences, gates, funnels and crushes of trackways imposed habitual patterns and constraints on the physical, embodied movements of people and livestock (q.v. Ingold 2000, 204; Jackson 1989, 146), but these features emerged out of the very same tasksapes, and afforded the potential for further novel encounters, practices and assemblages (Joyce 2008, 34). Similarly, human and non-human practices and social relations created conditions for the construction of trackways, but these in turn provided arenas for human and animal conviviality or conflict, traditions, memories and myths. Trackways attracted movement, demanded to be walked along.

It was within trackways and at funnels and crushes that many of the myriad, mundane routines and dramas of everyday rural life were played out, and where people’s practical consciousness of identity could be brought into focus through particular practices and situations. In their daily and seasonal tasksapes people were continuously reminded of previous generations, and in some cases deliberately constructed trackways to reference earlier vestiges of occupation. Young women and men taking livestock along trackways passed corrals that triggered memories of (or aspirations to) prized beasts and bountiful herds, and assignations between lovers (Chadwick 2013b, 307); whereas older people might have remembered the time before the Roman road, or harsh winters when animals died. Individual



and communal identities and memories were maintained through practices such as ploughing, harvest and herding, reinforced through the co-operation necessary to create and maintain fields, enclosures and trackways, and linked to the health and well-being of animals, and the upkeep and presentation of boundaries and trackways, which could be a source of personal or kinship pride and status, or alternatively of scorn and ridicule (q.v. Giles 2012, 178; Gray 1999, 450; Lele 2006, 65–66). People may have been judged on their abilities at constructing banks, maintaining hedges, gates and fences, and how well they could handle livestock – choreographies of competency. Routine, performative skills of corralling, castration, shearing and slaughter were part of how people defined themselves, and were defined by others. Particular trackways may have been associated with specific people, families or communities.

Trackways were thus key ‘hodological spaces’ (Argounova-Low 2012, 195), implicit in constructions of individual and communal identities, which were partly constituted through habitual, embodied performances and encounters with such features and materials. People negotiated relations of kinship and exchange through movements and meetings along trackways (Argounova-Low 2012, 201–202; Bender 2001, 84; O’Hanlon & Frankland 2003, 175–176), whilst artefacts such as pottery, metalwork and querns were also moved along trackways and paths. People were engaged in a continuous process of immersing themselves in the past, negotiating paths and practices in the present, and projecting themselves into futures as yet untravelled. This was a co-presence of active assemblages, an on-going encounter with materiality and meaning through motional and emotional entwinings of people, animals and landscapes. It was a *wyrd* of wayfaring.<sup>2</sup>

In small-scale communities, travels from place to place are rarely uneventful, functional journeys between two points, but are ‘conduits of inscribed activity’ (Weiner 2001, 17–18). A broken fence or a gap in a hedge would have been mended on the spot wherever possible. Along the way, edible plants or herbal remedies were picked from the side of the track, switches or staffs cut from hedges, and kindling collected. In lean times the banks and hedges of trackways could provide valuable additional grazing. At passing places, people stopped to exchange information and gossip, or compare livestock. There may have been semi-formal greetings and bodily protocols to be observed when moving past the farmsteads and settlements of others (Fleming 2010, 17). Routes past or into enclosures were often circuitous, involving several changes of direction (Chadwick 2010, 311–313), reinforcing the social position of people within settlements to strangers or those of lesser status. Some tracks might have carried additional symbolic significance. At Ledston in West Yorkshire, three trackways converged on an unusual double-ditched enclosure and pit complex, some featuring human burials and placed deposits of animal remains and artefacts (Roberts 2005; [Fig. 3C](#)). Here there were probably social gatherings, with animals also part of the ‘pulse of festivity’ (Giles 2012, 178). At Ferrybridge, at least two trackways opened out onto another route curving past a henge, round barrows and other earlier prehistoric monuments (Chadwick 2007; Richardson 2005), which seem to have been respected or actively avoided.

It would be easy to succumb to a romanticised nostalgia regarding trackways, evident perhaps in some of the otherwise evocative writing of Bunting, Macfarlane and others, but this would be too simplistic. Some double-ditched trackways replaced older ‘open’ trails with more closely prescribed paths of movement, subject to surveillance (Giles 2007, 241). People and livestock had to pass through a series of graded spaces and thresholds, where bodies of animals and humans alike could be constrained, controlled and counted. Formerly open vistas from trails were replaced by more limited views, partly blocked by hedges, fences and gates.

This may have reflected a wider ‘hardening’ of tenure, with particular individuals or communities asserting claims over certain places and paths, and the disappearance of areas of open grazing previously utilised by different groups. In some instances this occurred during the early to mid-Iron Age, but it became especially prominent during the later Iron Age, which also saw the increased construction of enclosures around settlements (Chadwick 2010; Thomas 1997). On the Yorkshire Wolds, despite extensive linear earthworks constructed during the later Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age, much of the landscape remained relatively ‘open’ until the development of field systems, trackways and ‘ladder’ settlements during the mid to later Iron Age (Giles 2007, 2012).

The development of trackways was thus likely to have been far more significant than a desire to keep animals out of arable areas, for this does not appear to have been previously problematic. Trackways and field systems may instead have represented profound social, tenurial and political changes, which were perhaps challenged or contested and could even have divided some communities. Along with the daily and seasonal journeys of herders and their charges, trackways could also have facilitated the movements of rustlers, and raiders bent on blood payments, revenge and pillage. Transgressors such as outcasts and outlaws might have crossed boundaries and moved outside of trackways, though they may have been punished for it.<sup>5</sup> Each trackway had its own biography, inextricably caught up with the local landscape and the histories of the people and animals that experienced them.

As more radical, post-human approaches suggest (Bennett 2010; Buller 2014; DeLanda 2006; Ingold 2007; 2011; Johnston 2008; Lorimer 2010; Lucas 2013; Murdoch 1997), these features did not cease to be active places once forgotten by people. Trackways remained actants with their own multiple afterlives, legacies or life trajectories (Bradley 1987, 14; Hodder 2012, 193; Joy 2009, 543). They continued to be inhabited and experienced by animals, insects and birds, penetrated by frosts, and soaked by rainfall. Pot sherds, bone, burnt stone and charcoal within their banks and ditches settled and shifted over decades and centuries. Some prehistoric or Romano-British trackways were still significant to Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, or they became part of field and parish boundaries experienced by medieval travellers and farmers; but in the majority of cases the ditches and holloways silted up, banks eroded or were ploughed up, or were colonised by woodland. Some continued to entangle themselves with human bodies and biographies, but more often these unravelled with time, and fading social memories.

Landscapes and materials, human and non-human animals, identities and agencies were all in motion. Along trackways, in fields or on areas of lowland or upland pasture, agency emerged through relational, complex constraints and affordances between people, animals, objects and the landscape, in assemblages of practice, materiality, movement and memory. Only through exploring such agencies, mobilities and meshworks can archaeologists do justice to these features, and the pasts they call up.

## Notes

1. The University of Oxford English Landscapes and Identities Project (World Wide Web <http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/englishlandscapes-introduction.html>).
2. Such approaches are exemplified by the Oxford Roman Economy Project. In contrast, EngLaId and The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain Project at the University of Reading are combining economic *and* social approaches to the data, and are set to produce much more nuanced narratives as a result.

3. One reason behind the relative paucity of later Iron Age ceramics in northern Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire and parts of West Yorkshire (Chadwick 2010), and even the lack of Roman ceramics on some later sites, might have been that many sections of the population were still quite mobile, and that many ostensibly permanent ‘settlements’ were only inhabited on a seasonal basis.
4. Wyrd: The principle, power, or agency by which events are predetermined; fate, destiny (Oxford English Dictionary Online <http://www.oed.com>). The English word *weird* and Old English *wyrd* are derived from the Old Saxon *wurd* (plural *wurdi*), the Old High German *wurt* or *\*wurdz* and the Old Norse *urð-r*, with a meaning ‘to come to pass, to become, to be due’. It also referred to personal destiny or fate. The word’s more recent sense of something ‘uncanny’ or ‘different’, however, is also relevant to the development of self-critical, interpretative approaches to trackways, materiality, agency and animality.
5. I am grateful to Duncan Brown for this pertinent point.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Anwen Cooper, Chris Gosden, Letty Ten Harkel and Laura Morley of the EngLaId Project for inviting me to be a discussant at the stimulating seminar on Landscape and Agency at the University of Oxford in June 2013, which set me thinking about these issues. I am also grateful to Ben Jervis and Harold Mytum for allowing me to present an early version of this paper in their session at the Theoretical Archaeology Group conference at Bournemouth University in December 2013. This paper was drafted during Catfest 2014 – I would like to thank Eleanor Ghey and Paul Cox for providing me with the creative space, and the mighty Rufus for sharing his desk.

Over the years I have benefited greatly from the ideas and advice of friends and colleagues, but I would especially like to acknowledge Chris Cumberpatch, Mark Edmonds, Helen Evans, Chris Fenton-Thomas, Catriona Gibson, Oliver Harris, Daniela Hofmann, Kate Howell, Mark Knight, Lesley McFadyen, Debora Moretti, Joshua Pollard, Rachel Pope, Jane Richardson, Graham Robbins, Jeremy Taylor and Gwilym Williams. I have had particularly pleasurable conversations concerning boundaries, movement, animals and the landscape with Oscar Aldred, Melanie Giles, Gary Robinson and Helen Wickstead. Daniela Hofmann, Jeremy Taylor and three anonymous external reviewers commented on earlier drafts of this paper and it is much improved as a result, though any remaining inadequacies are my responsibility. I am grateful to Colin Merrony, Chris Grimbley and Robert Johnston at the University of Sheffield for allowing me access to the University of Sheffield Library of Aerial Photographs (SLAP) that belonged to the late Derrick Riley, and for permission to reproduce some of those images; and also to Colin for details of the Brodsworth project. Ian Roberts of Archaeological Services WYAS and Debora Moretti kindly provided me with additional references and images. I would also like to thank Mark Knight and the Cambridge Archaeological Unit for permission to use the photograph of Bronze Age animal hoof prints at Must Farm, Cambridgeshire.

I would like to dedicate this paper to my son Teg, for the pleasure of our shared path but also the different tracks that he will take in the future.

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## Author biography

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## **Abstract**

In archaeological considerations of Iron Age and Romano-British landscapes, trackways are usually interpreted in purely normative terms, merely as means of getting from one settlement to another, or as functional features to assist with the herding of animals. In these somewhat static expositions, the role of trackways as places in themselves, and their long-term importance in constructions of social identity and memory is often overlooked, as are the complex relationships between people and animals within the landscape. Recent theoretical ideas concerning relational agency and identity, materiality and movement have much to offer in terms of our archaeological understandings of these features. This paper explores the interpretative potential of such approaches using case studies of Iron Age and Romano-British trackways from Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. Integrating theories of identity, embodiment, materiality, relationality and practice highlights the sedentarism of previous explanations, and allows for much more nuanced accounts of highly dynamic, mobile meshworks, where agency resided in complex constraints and affordances between people, animals and the materiality of the lived-in landscape.